



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

Emergency Food Assistance Program

Closeout Report for State Fiscal Year 2015

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (WSDA)

Food Safety and Consumer Services Division

Food Assistance Programs

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The WSDA Emergency Food Assistance Program

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Food Assistance Programs Overview

The Washington State Department of Agriculture's (WSDA) Food Assistance Programs assist more than 500 local food banks, food pantries, meal programs, and tribes in providing emergency food to low-income and vulnerable individuals throughout Washington State. 1 in 6 Washingtonians received food from food pantries that were supported with resources from our programs. Our goals are to develop key partnerships and data-driven strategies to alleviate hunger and increase access to healthier food options available in the emergency food system while supporting the agricultural community.

Emergency Food Assistance Program Food Pantry Closeout Results

Operations

Washington State food banks and pantries, including tribal food pantries, spent a total of \$4,935,995 in Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) state funding in Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15). Of that total, they charged 9.44% to administrative costs down a full percentage point from 2014. In FY15, they also spent \$2,126,949 on food purchases, approximately 43.1% of their EFAP funding, down just .7% from FY14, and \$11,996 on equipment purchases. The balance of EFAP funding was spent on costs associated with operating their food programs such as storage, transportation, employees' salaries and benefits, supplies, and utilities.

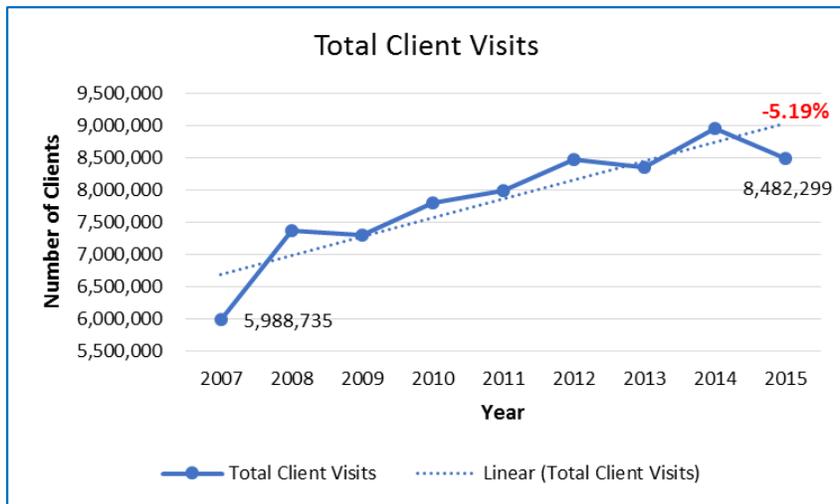
Emergency Food Assistance Food Pantry Demographics

The number of Washingtonians that received emergency food in Fiscal Year 2015 dropped dramatically from the previous year, but the need was deeper.

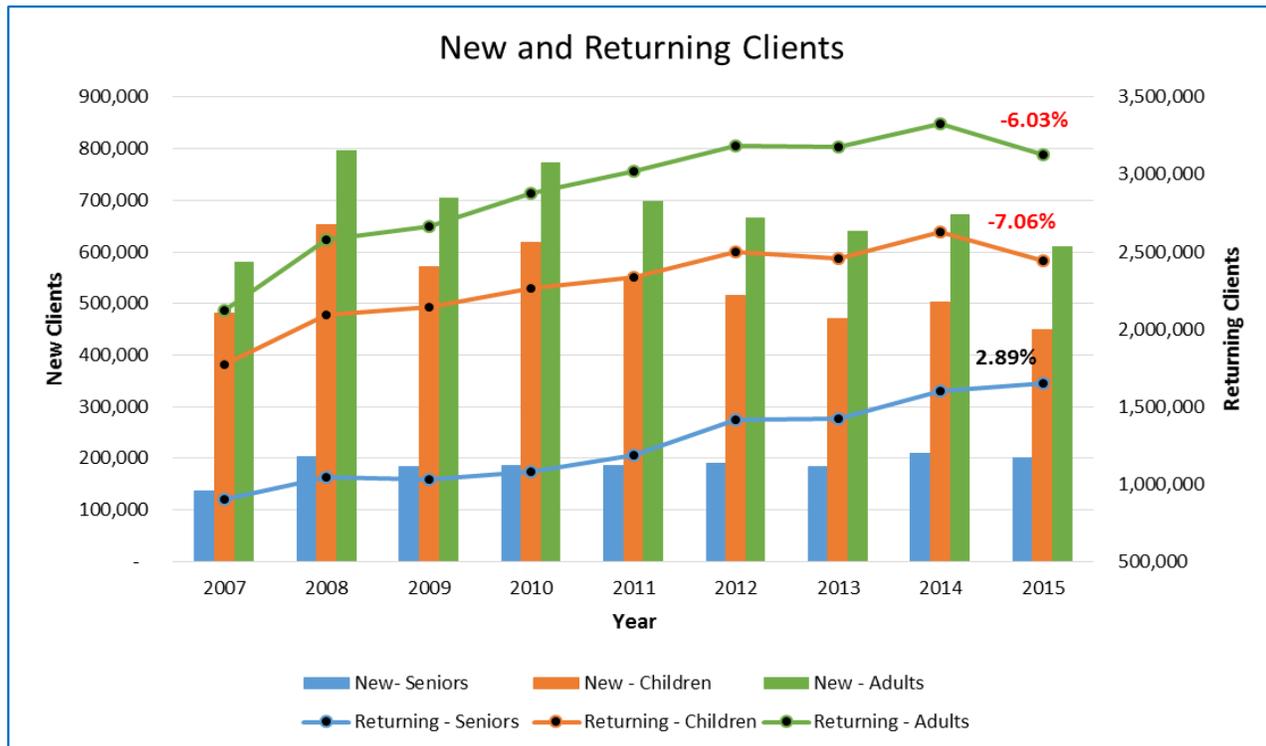
The number of people using food pantries (new clients) in FY15 was 1.26 million as compared to 1.38 million in FY14, a drop of nearly 9%.



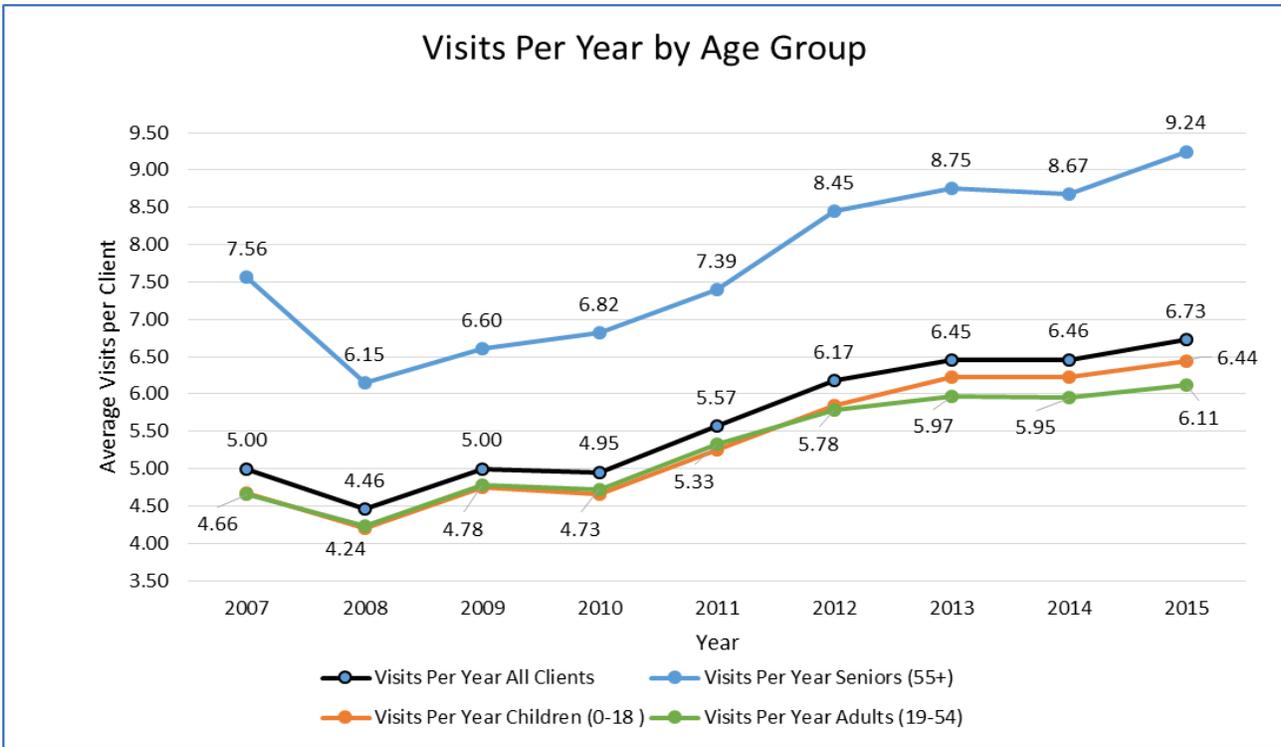
The number of visits (new plus returning clients) in FY15 was 8.48 million, a 5.19% decrease from 8.94 million in FY14. Interestingly, by contrast, the number of returning clients dropped by only 4.50%, from 7.56 to 7.22 million. The exception to the slight drop in the number of returning clients were seniors, whose returning visits actually went up by 2.89%.



Even with the drop in numbers, the number of returning clients and total visits were the highest numbers ever reported with the exception of FY14.



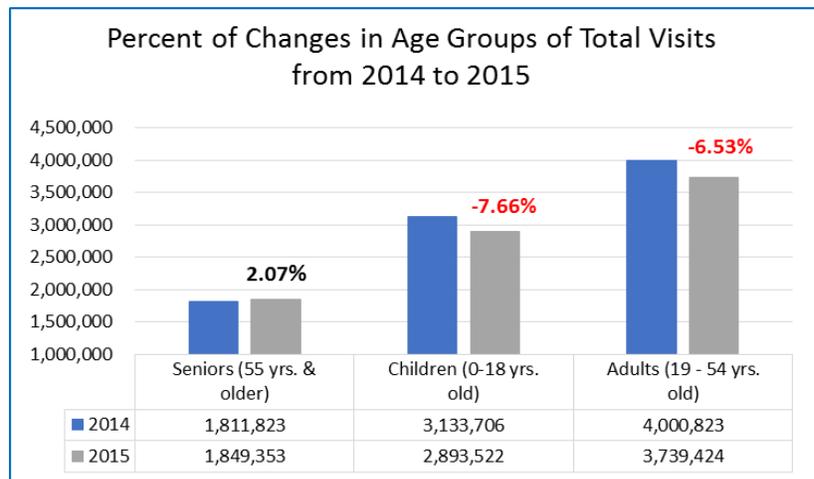
The result of the smaller drop in returning clients versus new clients is that those using the emergency food system used it more often than the previous year, 6.73 times per year in FY15 compared to 6.46 times per year in FY14. In fact, this was the highest number of average visits per year ever recorded. By far, seniors had to use food pantries more often, an average of 9.24 times per year indicating a deeper need than younger food recipients. The fact that those using food pantries averaged nearly 2 visits more per year than pre-recession years seems to indicate that, even with the improving economy and fewer people needing help, those who are still finding it necessary to request assistance are struggling more than ever.



Food Pantry Visit Age Distributions

The percentage of visits by age group has changed since FY07, prior to the recession. The percentage of the total visits that were made by seniors went up from 17.31% to 21.80% in those 8 years while the percentage of total visits who were children declined from 37.58% to 34.11% and adults slightly decreased from 45.11% to 44.09%. In FY15, the number of visits by age were as follows:

- Children = 2,893,522 visits (34.11%)
- Adults = 3,739,424 visits (44.09%)
- Seniors = 1,849,353 visits (21.80%)

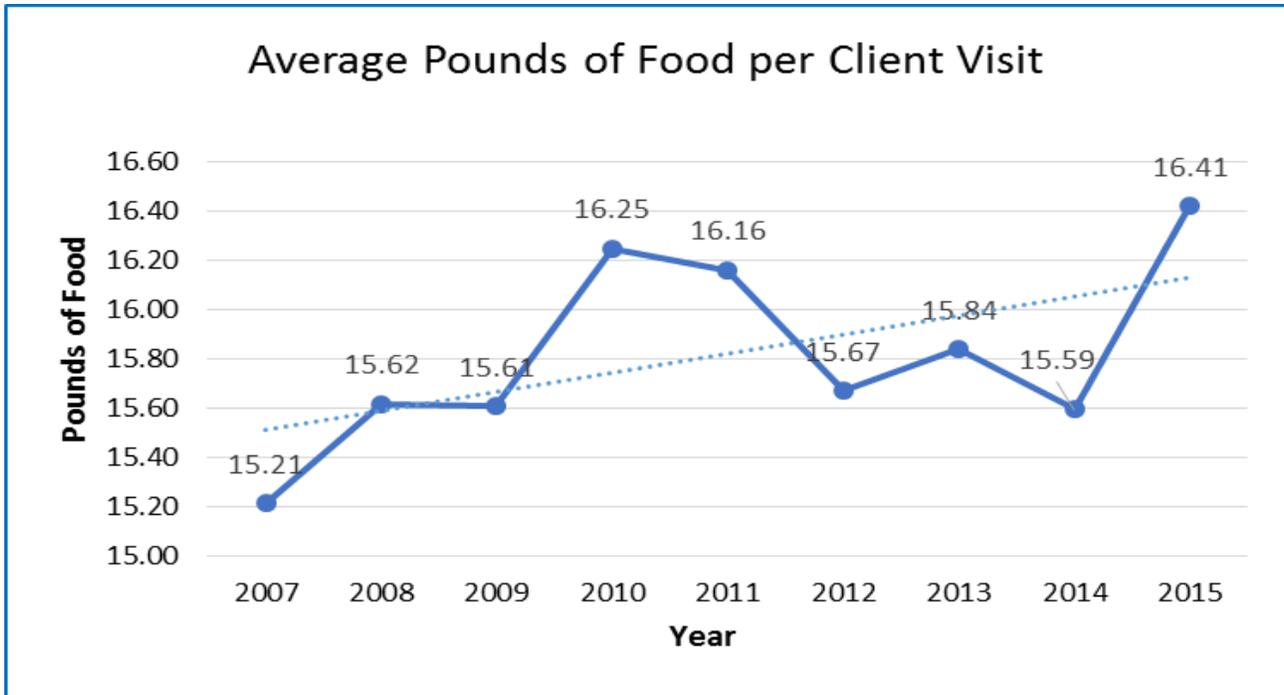


Although the new clients went down in every age category over the past year, the smallest decrease in new clients came from seniors. Seniors had a 4.25% decrease compared to a decrease of 10.79% in children and 9% in adults.

It appears that in FY15 seniors continued to have a tougher time than the rest of the population making ends meet.

Food Distribution

In FY15 the total pounds of food distributed by food pantries to families was very nearly the same as last year, 139.49 million pounds in FY14 compared to 139.23 million pounds in FY15. The good news is that, because there were fewer visits to food pantries, the average pounds of food a client received with each visit increased by nearly a pound, from 15.59 in FY14 to 16.41 pounds in FY15. This is the largest yearly increase and highest number of pounds per visit ever recorded, a testament to the ability of food banks and food pantries to procure and distribute food with increasing efficiency.



It is note-worthy that the food that providers are distributing, for the most part, is healthier food. In the first two quarterly surveys that food pantries completed noting the type of food they distributed, over 80% of the food they offered clients was considered “healthier” food. Over the next 18 months there will be continued, concerted efforts to increase the percentage of healthier food.

It costs EFAP food providers about \$.33 to procure a pound of food. This is about 1/5 of the estimated cost of \$1.66 per pound of donated food last year. So for every dollar going into the emergency food system, \$5 goes back to the community in the form of food to low-income families. The 139.23 million pounds of food cost the emergency food system about \$46.30 million whereas it would have cost upwards of \$231.12 million based on last year’s donated value rate of \$1.66 per pound.

The amount of match (cash and in-kind) supporting the emergency food system from other resources increased from \$303.31 million in FY14 to \$324.48 million in FY15, a 6.98% increase. This includes more than:

- \$255.26 million in additional donated food valued at \$1.66 per pound
- \$22.63 million in volunteer labor valued at \$10/hour
- \$5.22 million in other donated services such as transportation by volunteers
- \$41.37 million in other cash funding

Although these numbers are quite impressive, some contractors chose not to report some of the match they and their subcontractors did indeed secure, so this figure actually indicates only a portion of the actual contributed match.

EFAP Tribal Program Closeout Results

Operations

The Tribal Food Voucher Program plays a critical role feeding families in tribes that have either very small food pantries or none at all and limited resources to provide emergency food to their families. In FY15, tribes spent \$415,511 of EFAP funding on their food voucher programs compared to \$384,557 in FY14, with just 5.34% of their funds being spent on administrative costs. The vast majority of participating tribes allocate all or nearly all of their EFAP voucher funds into the vouchers themselves and pay for administrative and operational costs with matching funds. Tribes reported a total of \$363,891 in match from other resources to support their voucher activities. Tribes are required to match their state funds by 35%.

Tribal Food Voucher Program Demographics

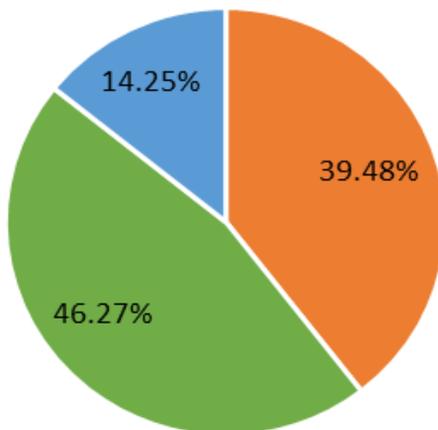
The 29 tribes¹ participating in the voucher program issued vouchers to 8,508 people in FY15 compared to 9,526 people in FY14, a 10.68% decrease. There was a total of 19,258 visits last year, a 9.81% increase from the previous year of 17,536. There were 10,750 returning clients in FY15 compared to 8,010 returning clients in FY14, an enormous 34.20% increase. They averaged 2.26 trips to their tribal offices for vouchers compared to 1.84 visits the previous year. As with the food pantry program, there were fewer clients who seemed to need more help. In addition, the number of vouchers issued to clients by tribes depends on the available funding. Because tribes had an additional \$31,000 compared to FY14, tribes were able to offer more vouchers.

In FY15, the distribution of tribal food vouchers by age group percentages were as follows:

- Children: 7,603 visits (39.47%)
- Adults: 8,913 visits (46.28%)
- Seniors: 2,745 visits (14.25%)

¹ 17 tribes applied under two tribal nonprofit agency contractors. 4 tribes used EFAP funding for only a food pantry program.

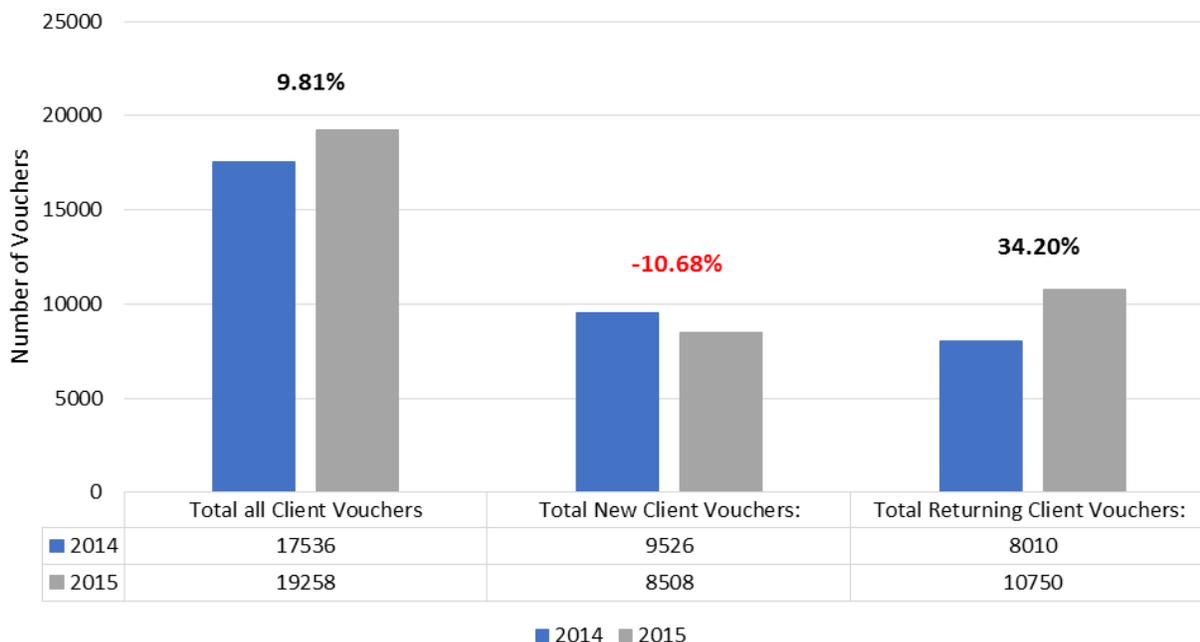
Tribal Voucher by Age Group 2015



■ All Children (0-18)
 ■ Adults (19-54)
 ■ Seniors (55+)

This is basically the same age distribution percentages as the previous year.

Tribal Voucher Clients Percentage of Change 2014-2015



As indicated in the food pantry section, several tribes use their EFAP funding for their food pantry activities. Looking at just the tribal food pantry demographics for FY14 and FY15, their new clients increased by 44.30% and their returning clients by just 3.86%, opposite of the trend of more returning and fewer new with tribes' voucher clients. Further research would be needed to explain this difference.

Summary and Trends

The improving economy appears to have had a positive impact on more and more families with the number of clients using food pantries going down by 8.93% and the number of visits decreasing by 5.19%. Those who hadn't seen those positive effects were having a more and more difficult time making ends meet. They were returning to food pantries more often than ever before. These same trends also existed for those receiving Tribal food vouchers.

The noticeable and disturbing exception to the decrease in visits to food pantries were seniors whose number of visits actually increased by 37,500, or 2.07%, compared to decreases in children and adults by 7.66% and 6.53% respectively. Seniors also used food pantries much more often than other age groups by 3 additional times per year. This is a very substantial difference. Our elderly seem to be having a much harder time meeting their most basic needs.

Strategies

The Food Assistance Programs continues to work in partnership to improve program operations, client service delivery methods and availability of healthier food options. Some of the most recent collaborations FAP has been involved in and will continue in the future are:

Increasing the availability of healthier foods:

- Protein – WSDA brought together federal, state and local agencies involved in regulating donated protein (e.g. livestock, wild game, wild fish, chickens and eggs) to eliminate conflicting or confusing regulations, making it easier to donate and accept these kinds of products.
- Perishable Capacity – In partnership with emergency food providers and stakeholders, we are involved with a statewide assessment of food pantries storage capacity to handle fresh and frozen perishable foods. This assessment will also complement the national survey that we conducted which looks at how states distribute food with the objective of making the distribution system as efficient and cost-effective for all involved.
- Farm to Food Pantry Pilot Program - Expanding our partnerships with local farmers to improve the quality of food being given to families and to expand markets for farmers.

Increasing Access:

- Seniors - Seniors need assistance with additional and more nutritious food. Nutrition education, especially within the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, which provides seniors a 30 pound box of nutritious food each month, will be an important focus in the next several years. The Food Assistance Program's work with farmers will have a very positive impact on all food pantry clients, but particularly seniors who are using food pantries more and more.

- Partnerships - We are also working with Department of Health, Department of Social Health and Services, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Veterans Affairs, Department of Corrections, Non-profits, and other partners to determine collaborative projects that will benefit low-income Washingtonians.

These collaborations with private and public sector partners will help in reducing hunger in families across the state and have a positive impact on the economic vitality of our state's agricultural community.

Data Sources

- Contractors' monthly Food Pantry demographic reports
- Contractors' monthly Tribal Food Voucher demographic reports
- Emergency Food Assistance Program Access database reports

Definitions

“New or Unduplicated Client”, means a Client served by an Emergency Food Provider during the reporting period for the **FIRST** time in the **current** fiscal year.

“Returning or Duplicated Client”, means a client served by an Emergency Food Provider during the reporting period who the Emergency Food Provider previously served during the **current** fiscal year.

“Visits” means all new client plus returning client visits during the fiscal year.

Yearly Data for Food Pantries, State Fiscal Years 2005-2015

	SFY05	SFY06	SFY07	SFY08	SFY09	SFY10	SFY11	SFY12	SFY13	SFY14	SFY15
Total Client Visits (New & Returning)	6,299,515	6,164,962	5,988,735	6,626,900	7,300,476	7,803,414	7,980,242	8,469,360	8,353,656.00	8,946,352	8,482,299
New Clients	1,233,886	1,225,020	1,198,026	1,252,800	1,461,116	1,576,894	1,433,580	1,371,661	1,294.36	1,384,608	1,260,963
Returning Clients	5,065,629	4,939,942	4,790,709	5,010,100	5,839,360	6,226,520	6,546,662	7,097,699	7,059,293	7,561,744	7,221,336
Total New Families Served	414,697	426,195	421,786	431,830	499,918	546,431	505,392	488,207	458,868	484,749	457,407
Average # of Visits Per Client per Year (Visits/New Clients)	5.11	5.03	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.95	5.57	6.17	6.45	6.46	6.73
Pounds of Food Distributed	90,868,168	91,194,079	91,112,694	97,622,472	113,952,122	126,781,520	128,951,893	132,724,168	132,303,513	139,495,803	139,230,104
Average # of lbs of Food/Client Visit/Yr(lbs/client visits)	14.43	14.8	15.21	15.59	15.61	16.25	16.16	15.68	15.84	15.59	16.41

State Fiscal Year = July 1 – June 30

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